

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Final Rejection mailed March 12, 2003, and the Advisory Action mailed June 30, 2003. Applicants are submitting this Amendment together with a Request for Continued Examination. Claims 1, 13, 34 and 35 have been amended without adding new matter, and claim 6 has been cancelled in this Amendment. Claims 1-4, 7-13, 17-28, 31-35 and 39-46 are now pending in this application.

In the Final Rejection, rejections of dependent claims are sometimes discussed before the rejections of their respective base claims. These remarks are set up in claim order.

Claims 1, 8-11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by Beach. Applicants disagree with the rejection for at least the reasons set forth in the Request for Reconsideration submitted on June 12, 2003, which have yet to be addressed.

In addition, claim 1 has been amended to recite the limitation of cancelled claim 6, namely that the sliding mechanism comprises "slider blocks having slide rails." Claim 1 has also been amended to recite that the "third section ... [is] in contact with said slider blocks." The Final Rejection admits that Beach fails to teach or suggest "using slider blocks in slide rails," but asserts that it would have been obvious "that the wheels and rails taught by Beach perform the equivalent function." The wheels and rails of Beach have nothing in common with the claimed sliding mechanism or its function. The claimed "slider blocks" of the sliding mechanism move together with the claimed "third section," which itself is moved by the claimed "block and a lead screw" of the sliding mechanism. Nothing in Beach teaches or suggests this limitation, nor does the Final Rejection explain to the contrary. Claims 8-11 depend from claim 1 and should be allowed together with claim 1.

Claims 2-4, 7, 13, 17-23, 26-28, 31 and 35 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Beach as applied in claim 1, and further in view of Mills. Initially, Beach and Mills are not properly combinable as outlined in the Request for Reconsideration, and this rejection should be withdrawn for at least that reason.

Claims 2-4 and 7 depend from claim 1. As discussed above, amended claim 1 is allowable over Beach, and Mills adds nothing to Beach to remedy its deficiencies. Claims 2-4 and 7 are thus allowable for at least the reasons for allowance of claim 1, and also because the combinations recited by these dependent claims are neither taught nor suggested by the cited references, either taken alone or in combination.

Claim 12 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Beach as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Ueda. Claim 1 is allowable over Beach as explained above, and claim 12 which depends from claim 1 is likewise allowable. Further, claim 12 recites a “second sliding mechanism over said third section ... and a fourth section disposed over said second sliding mechanism.” The Final Rejection asserts only that it would have been obvious “to provide the directional capabilities taught by Ueda to the apparatus taught by Beach.” Final Rejection, page 7. Claim 12 does not recite “directional capabilities;” it recites a second sliding mechanism and a fourth section over the second sliding mechanism. The Final Rejection does not even assert that the alleged combination of references teaches all of the elements of claim 12, and thus fails to establish a prima facie case of obviousness.

Claim 13 is believed to be allowable for the reasons discussed in the Request for Reconsideration, which have yet to be addressed. In addition, claim 13 has been amended to recite a “lifting mechanism comprising a jacking screw mechanism and ..., said jacking screw mechanism having a manual drive mechanism.” Mills and Beach, taken alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest this limitation, and this an additional reason why claim 13 is allowable.

Claims 17-23 depend from claim 13 and should be allowed for at least the reasons for allowance of claim 13. Also, the combinations recited in these dependent claims are neither taught nor suggested by the cited references, taken alone or in combination. For example, claim 18 recites a “sliding mechanism [which] further comprises slider blocks having slide rails.”

Claim 18 also stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Beach as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Mills. Claim 18 is allowable because it depends from claim 1, which, as explained above is not anticipated by Beach. Also, claim 18 recited limitations which are not taught or suggested by the cited references. Further, as discussed above, Beach and Mills are not properly combinable, providing added reasons for the allowance of claim 18.

Claim 24 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Beach in view of Mills as applied to claim 13, and further in view of Ueda. Claim 13 is allowable over Beach in view of Mills, for the reasons given above. Claim 24 depends from claim 13 and is allowable for at least the same reasons. Further, claim 24 recites a “third section containing a second sliding mechanism disposed over said second section,” which is not rendered obvious by the teachings of the references. The Final Rejection relies on Ueda’s teaching of “directional capabilities” for rejecting claim 24, but does not address the specific limitations of claim 24 quoted above. Accordingly, a prima facie case of obviousness has not been established.

Claim 25 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Beach. Claim 25 recites an apparatus having a “mechanism for sliding an object ... wherein said mechanism for sliding comprises a lead screw and a movable block mechanism, and slider blocks having slide rails.” As discussed above with respect to claim 1, Beach fails to teach or suggest this limitation, and claim 25 is allowable for at least this reason, and the reasons outlined in the Request for Reconsideration.

Claims 26-28 and 31-33 depend from claim 25 and contain every limitation of claim 25. Claims 26-28 and 31 should be allowed for at least the reasons for allowance of claim 25, and also because the combination of Beech and Mills is improper.

The Final Rejection also asserts that Beach “teaches” the limitations of claim 34. Claim 34 recites a “lifting and lowering mechanism ... wherein said gas cylinders assist said jacking screws in said lifting and lowering mechanism.” The Final Rejection relies on the combination of Beach and Mills to meet this claim limitation, but the references are not properly combinable as explained in the Request for Reconsideration. Moreover, claim 34 has been amended to recite that the “four jacking screws hav[e] a manual transmission system for operation of said jacking screws.” The cited references, taken alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest this limitation, and this is an additional reason why claim 34 is allowable.

Claim 35 recites a method of operating a lift mechanism comprising “manually rotating an input shaft attached to jacking mechanisms and supplying a pressurized gas to gas cylinder assemblies.” The cited references, even if properly combinable (and they are not) fail to teach or suggest this limitation. Further, claim 35 has been amended to recite that supplying the pressurized gas to the gas cylinder assemblies is to “assist said rotating of said input shaft.” The cited references, taken alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest this limitation, and this is another reason why claim 35 is allowable.

Claims 35, 39, 40, 41, 42 and 45 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Beach in view of Nemoto. Claim 35 is believed to be allowable for at least the Reasons set forth in the Request for Reconsideration, which have yet to be addressed. Further, claim 35 has been amended to recite that supplying the pressurized gas to the gas cylinder assemblies is to “assist said rotating of said input shaft.” The cited references, taken alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest this limitation, and this is another reason why claim 35 is allowable. Claims 39 and 40 depend from claim 35 and should be allowed together with claim 35.

Claim 41 recites a method for transferring an object comprising “providing a base frame, a top frame, and a middle frame disposed between said base frame and said top frame; [and] providing a slide mechanism between [the] middle frame and [the] top frame” (emphasis added). An embodiment of this subject matter can be seen in Figure 1, for example, and accompanying specification which discloses a middle frame 30 is disposed between a lower frame 20 and a top frame 40. The top frame 40 is elevationally higher than the middle frame 30. In addition, a sliding mechanism 70 is provided between the middle frame 30 and the top frame 40. Beach and Nemoto, taken alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest these quoted claim limitations.

The Final Rejection asserts that Beach teaches a “base section (14), [and] a middle section and a support section (60) adapted to move vertically and horizontally.” Final Rejection, page 8. The Final Rejection does not assert that Beach teaches a middle frame disposed between the base frame and the top frame. Indeed, Beach does not. Beach discloses a lower frame 10 and an upper frame 11. See Figure 1. Beach further discloses an adjuster assembly 13 which comprises components adapted for horizontal movement. Significantly, with reference to Figure 3, 4 and 5, the adjuster assembly 13 is not elevationally higher than the upper frame 11. There is no component in Beach which is disposed between a lower and upper frame, and which has a sliding mechanism between such component and the upper frame, as recited in claim 41. Nemoto does not remedy this shortcoming. Applicants note that the above arguments were presented in the Amendment dated January 3, 2003, and in the Request for Reconsideration, but have not yet been addressed.

For at least these reasons, claim 41 is allowable. Claims 42 and 45 depend from claim 41 and is allowable together with claim 41, and also because the unique combinations recited by these dependent claims are neither taught nor suggested by the cited prior art.

Claim 43 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Beach in view of Nemoto as applied to claim 41, further in view of Shiiba. Claim 43

depends from claim 41 and contains all of the limitations of claim 41 and is accordingly allowable for the reasons expressed for the allowance of claim 41. Shiiba adds nothing to remedy the deficiencies of the combination of Beach and Nemoto.

Claim 44 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Beach in view of Nemoto as applied to claim 41, and further in view of Mills. Claim 44 depends from claim 41 and contains all of the limitations of claim 41. As discussed above, claim 41 is allowable over Beach in view of Nemoto, and Mills adds nothing to remedy the deficiencies of the alleged combination. Thus, claim 44 should be allowed for at least the same reasons as for allowance of claim 41. Moreover, claim 44 recites the method step of "manually rotating an input shaft attached to jacking mechanisms and supplying a pressurized gas to gas cylinder assemblies." Mills, even if properly combinable with Beach and Nemoto (and it is not), fails to teach or suggest the combination of manually rotating an input shaft attached to jacking mechanisms and supplying a pressurized gas to gas cylinder assemblies. For this additional reason, claim 44 should be allowed.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue.

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Respectfully submitted,

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